

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

FLOOD CONTROL • SOLID WASTE MGMT • SURVEYOR • TRANSPORTATION



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
PUBLIC AND SUPPORT
SERVICES GROUP

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

222 West Hospitality Lane, Second Floor • San Bernardino, CA 92415-0017 • (909) 386-8701

Administration/Engineering Fax (909) 386-8900

VANA R. OLSON
Director of Public Works
PETER H. WULFMAN
Solid Waste Division Manager

January 22, 2008

Dear Property Owner:

The wildfires of October 2007 severely damaged or destroyed structures on more than 500 properties in the San Bernardino mountain areas. According to our records, yours is among them, but we have been unsuccessful in reaching you or haven't been contacted by you in response to our correspondence. To assist property owners in recovering from their loss, the County offers property owners the opportunity to participate in the County sponsored fire Debris Removal Program. For many reasons there is an overall need to have the properties cleaned up. The County's goal is to have all affected properties cleaned up by spring so rebuilding can begin and to avoid the blighted remnants of homes we have experienced from previous disasters.

As a property owner, you must choose how your property will be cleaned up. If you have already cleaned up your property or have hired a licensed contractor to do the work, please contact us at 909-386-8701 so that we may put you on the 'taking action' list.

If you have not yet made up your mind, here are the minimum tasks required to clean up a property:

1. Temporary erosion control measures put in place (immediate hazard).
2. Hazard trees removed (immediate hazard).
3. Destroyed vehicles removed.
4. Fire debris/ash removed and disposed, including unusable foundations and chimneys.
5. Long-term erosion control measures put in place.

We Recommend the County Sponsored Debris Removal Program-But the Choice Is Yours

San Bernardino County offers a comprehensive debris removal program that will address all the required tasks associated with fire debris clean up. There is no direct cost to the property owner (just the debris removal portion of your fire insurance policy to a maximum of 5% if insurance is within the limits of Coverage A) and you can be assured the work will be done right, will be done by a licensed contractor, and will be done safely. The program is open to all residents whether insured or not, at no direct cost to the owner.

Program Features

- Destroyed vehicle removal
- Debris & ash removal and disposal, including foundations & chimneys
- Hazard tree removal
- Erosion control
- Final soil sampling
- Complete written report including photos and site sketch showing the original foundation location relative to fixed landmarks

MARK H. UFFER
County Administrative Officer
NORMAN A. KANOLD
Assistant County Administrator
Public and Support
Services Group

Board of Supervisors

BRAD MITZELFELT	First District	DENNIS HANSBERGER	Third District
PAUL BIANE	Second District	GARY OVITT	Fourth District
JOSIE GONZALES	Fifth District		

Program Benefits

- No direct cost to property owner, whether insured or not
- Assures timely clean up
- Provides community-wide debris removal
- Work done by qualified licensed contractors
- Work done safely in accordance with CalOSHA rules
- Work meets County, State and Federal clean up requirements--no "surprises" later
- One-stop coordination of all aspects of the removal process
- Progress information via Local Customer Service Center & staff
- Call 909-867-7579

Debris Removal: Things to Consider

As stated above, the County's intent is to have all affected properties cleaned up by spring. To help property owners evaluate their removal options and make a choice, we offer these tips:

Debris Removal Cost Coverage: Know how much of the cost will be covered by your insurance. As with any aspect of your insurance policy, read and understand how much the policy will cover and confirm with your insurance company. Participation in the County's program will not cost you more than the debris removal portion of your insurance.

Liability Issues: Workman's Compensation must be provided to employees working on your property. To protect yourself, make sure your contractors not only have all the right types of insurance, but also the right amounts of insurance. Contractors have to be state licensed—if unlicensed contractors are discovered, they will be shut down. This may leave the property owner with the task of finding another contractor to finish the work, and the cost of doing that work. Bear in mind you are responsible for erosion caused by run-off from your property as a result of the cleanup activity. Also, significant erosion will have to be repaired before reconstruction can start. Property owners are responsible for proper disposal/recycling of their fire debris.

Timeliness: Your property must be properly cleaned up by early spring. Failure to do so could result in enforcement action.

Scope of Services: In order to make an informed decision, be sure to include all of the services offered. For example, the County Debris Removal Program coordinates all aspects of the removal process, including the minimum required tasks-- disposal, vehicle removal, debris, chimney, foundation & ash removal, tree removal, erosion control measures; and additional services of soil testing and final report to property owner.

Total Cost: Consider the complete cost for all of the tasks needed to get the property cleaned up and that the services offered meet your needs. Get more than one written quote, check references and with the Contractors State License Board (www.cslb.ca.gov).

Experience/qualifications: Is the contractor qualified to do the work? Have they done comparable work in the mountains before? Fire debris clean up in the mountains may require the use of specialized personnel such as civil engineers, are they included in the cost?

Licensed contractor: Is the contractor state licensed? Contractors doing work in a declared disaster area MUST be licensed by the State. Further, contractors doing jobs valued at greater than \$500 are required to have a state contractor's license, or risk being shut down by the state.

Site safety/Cal OSHA standards: Working on any construction site can be dangerous, it is particularly so in the mountains. Does the contractor conform to CalOSHA safety standards and have their workers received CalOSHA safety training? What is their safety record?

Documentation: Do you get a written final report that includes a sketch showing the original structure location and final soil sampling results? To protect yourself from liability, require proof of proper disposal/recycling of the debris from the contractor.

Impact on Property Value: Improperly done clean up work, in addition to leaving the property owner with work left to be done, can negatively impact property value. A property cleaned up with supporting documentation can help property value.

Making the Choice

As a property owner you have three choices (there is no "none of the above"), property owners must clean up their property.

- Sign-up with the County Debris Removal Program.
- Do the work yourself or by licensed contractors you hire.
- As a last resort, for the protection of the community, the work may be done through enforcement action (the entire cost, estimated at \$28,000 - \$35,000 per parcel, will be assessed against the property owner).

Please call the Debris Removal Program at 909-867-7579 or the Solid Waste Management Division at 909-386-8701 and advise us of your choice of action. If your property is already cleaned up or you have hired a contractor, please let us know so we can update our records. The County is dedicated to informing all affected property owners of the options available to them. The County is committed to facilitating the clean up of fire damaged properties and assuring that the entire affected areas are cleaned up for the benefit of the community as a whole.

Thank you in advance for responding. We look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,



Peter H. Wulfman
Division Manager